Shodasa Naama Mantra

(Contemplation of Three Divine Names)

हरे राम हरे राम राम राम हरे हरे,

हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे

Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare;
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

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In this 16-word Maha Mantra, the name Hari is repeated eight times, Rama is repeated four times, and Krishna is repeated four times. These repetitions are contemplated through profound theological frameworks aligned with the expansions and incarnations of the Supreme Lord:

Contemplation on HARI (Repeated 8 Times)

Vishnu: The Plenary Expansions and Incarnations represent the supreme forms of Lord Vishnu the Hari Sarvottama. Within this contemplation, we meditate upon Panchaniyamaka Bhagawadrupa the five foundational regulatory expansions of the Supreme God—Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Sankarshana, Vasudeva, and Narayana.

Narahari: Lord Narasimha (where *Hari* means lion), the protector of Prahlada and bestower of boons (*Prahlada Varada*).

Srihari: The eternal, inseparable divine couple, Lakshminarayana. Where Lakshmi is not present, Sri Hari will not be; and where Sri Hari is absent, Lakshmi does not stay.

Karirajavarada: The merciful Lord of the *Gajendra Moksha* episode, who swiftly flies down to rescue the surrendered elephant king Gajendra (where Kari means Elephant) from the crocodile.

Hare Sreenivaasa: Lord Venkateswara of Tirumala, who is *Saakshaatt* (manifest) Lord Vishnu, the absolute *Hari Sarvottama*. In Sri Venkatesha Storam from Brahmanad Purana, Lord Vekateswara is extolled as श्रीधरः पुण्डरीकाक्षः सर्वदेवस्तुतो **हरिः** In Sri Venkatachala Mahatmya, Lord Venkateswara is addressed as "Satyesam SatyaSankalpam Satyam SatyaVratam **Harim**"

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Hayagreeva: The horse-necked incarnation (where *Hari* also means horse), the supreme Lord of all knowledge and the ultimate destroyer of spiritual ignorance.

Savithru Naamaka Narayana: The supreme in-dweller operating from the center of the solar orb (Dhyeyassada Savithrumandala Madhyavarthi). Here, Hari means the sun or Arka, one of the Ashta Vasus whose internal driver (Antaryaami) is Lord Hari Himself.

Krishna Hari: The absolute connection between these names is established in scriptures like the *Sri Krishna Dwadasanama* Stothram from the Mahabharata, where Sri Krishna declares: **"प्रथमं तु हरिं विंद्यात्"** (First, know Me as Hari).

Similarly, sloka 69 (Naama #650) of the Sri Vishnu Sahasranama Stothram addresses Him as **"Kesavah-kesihaa-harih"**, the one who has slayed the demon, Keshi. Lord Sri Krishna is famously called as Kesava.

Some of the other terminologies associated with Hari are… hari-sarvottama (Hari-Sarvottamatva); hari-dina; harivaasara; harivamsa purana; harikatha; harikathaamrutasara...

Hari - The Destroyer of Sins and Bondages: Hari fundamentally derives from the root *Harati*, meaning "He who steals, removes, or destroys. He takes away the accumulated sins (*papas*) of eight different types of lifetimes and frees the soul from the *Ashta Pasha* (the eight worldly fetters: shame, doubt, fear, shyness, disgust, family lineage, culture, and wealth).

Hari - The Evoker of Devotion: Each repetition awakens one of the eight dimensions of spiritual progress, matching the eight stages of devotion (*Ashta-vidha Bhakti*), and purifies the

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Ashta-dala Padma (the eight-petalled lotus of the spiritual heart – Hridaya Kamala) where the Lord resides as the indweller (*Antaryaami*).

Hari – The Cosmic Alignment: The eight repetitions purify the *Ashta Prakriti* (the eight-fold material energy: earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, and ego) and act as a protective cosmic shield (*Kavacham*) over the eight directions of the universe.

Contemplation on RAMA (Repeated 4 Times)

The four repetitions of the name *Rama* are meditated upon as the supreme, blissful forms of the Lord who delights the universe:

Moola Rama: The primordial, ancient form of Lord Rama, historically worshipped with utmost devotion by Sri Madhvacharya and the subsequent lineage of the Madhva Sampradaya.

Dasaratha Rama: The Maryada Purushottama, the divine son of King Dasaratha, who exemplifies flawless righteousness and cosmic order.

Seeta Rama: The inseparable divine couple, where Prabhu Sri Ramachandra is eternally united with Goddess Seeta (the personification of pristine devotion and the *Abhimani Devata* of Chit-Prakriti) the direct incarnation of MahaLakshmi.

Bhargava Rama (ParashuRama): The powerful avatar born in the clan of Sage Bhrigu, the wielder of the divine axe, who eliminated adharma from the earth.

Contemplation on KRISHNA (Repeated 4 Times)

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The four repetitions of the name *Krishna* are meditated upon as the all-attractive, supreme reservoir of joy and wisdom:

Hari Krishna: The absolute Supreme Being who simultaneously attracts the minds of the devotees and destroys all their existential miseries.

Vasudeva Krishna: The son of Vasudeva, the ultimate cosmic consciousness who manifested to relieve the earth of its burdens.

Yasoda Krishna: The enchanting divine child who bound Himself to the mortar out of pure love for His mother Yasoda (*Damodara*), showing His extreme accessibility to pure devotion.

Vasishta Krishna (VEDAVYASA)**:** Lord Sri Hari appearing as the son of Sage Parashara, who classified the Vedas, authored the Mahabharata and Srimad Bhagavatam, and serves as the ultimate Guru of the universe.

Hari – The Taapatraya Nivaraka and Moksha Karaka

Lord Sri Hari is the ultimate refuge because He fulfills three primary dimensions of grace:

Taapatraya Nivaraka (TapatrayaHaaraka): He completely eliminates the worries, anxieties, and difficulties of His devotees by cooling the three burning fires of suffering: *Adhyatmika* (physical illness and mental anxiety), *Adhibhautika* (miseries caused by other living beings), and *Adhidaivika* (miseries caused by natural disasters or supernatural forces).

Moksha Karaka: As *Hari Sarvottama* (the ever-green Supreme God Sri Man Narayana), He destroys the otherwise

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endless cycle of birth and death (*Samsara*) by dissolving the binding karma of the soul.

Ajnana Haraka and Chitta Chora: He steals and destroys our spiritual ignorance (*Ajnana*). Simultaneously, He is so captivatingly beautiful that He steals the hearts of His devotees (*Chitta Chora*), filling their minds entirely with His presence.

This dual nature of destroying sins and granting ecstatic bliss is captured in the traditional etymological maxim (*Nirukta*):

हरति पापानि यः स्मृतः चित्त-आह्लाद-करकः।

तस्माद् हरिरिति प्रोक्तो बुधैस्तत्त्ववेदिभिः॥

Harati pāpāni yaḥ smṛtaḥ citta-āhlāda-karakaḥ |
Tasmād harir-iti prokto budhais-tattva-vedibhiḥ ||

Meaning: Because He destroys (*harati*) all sins the moment He is remembered (*yaḥ smṛtaḥ*), and because He brings absolute, ecstatic joy to the heart (*citta-āhlāda-karakaḥ*); therefore, He is declared as 'Hari' by the wise who know the ultimate truth.

This sentiment aligns with early Puranic references, such as the *Agni* and *Garuda Purana* line: *"Hari harati pāpāni duṣṭa-cittair api smṛtaḥ"* (Even if remembered by those with polluted minds, Hari still steals away their sins).

Sri Madhvacharya's Dwadasa Stotra...

In the third chapter of his *Dwadasa Stotra* (Verse 2), the great proponent of Tattvavada, Sri Madhvacharya sets a mood of complete surrender (*Prapatti*) by declaring the absolute dependency of the soul (*Jiva*) on the Lord:

हरिरेव परो हरिरेव गुरुः हरिरेव जगत्पितृमातृगतिः ।

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harirEva parO harirEva guruH harirEva jagat pitRumAtRugatiH

By repeating the word *"Harireva"* (Hari alone) three times, he firmly establishes that no secondary power can substitute for the Lord's universal roles:

HarirEva ParO: Hari is the Supreme Being (*Sarvottama*). He is completely independent (*Svatantra*), and there is no entity equal or superior to Him.

HarirEva GuruH: Hari is the Ultimate Teacher. While human guides teach us externally, the Lord as the inner guide (*Antaryaami*) provides the true light of spiritual knowledge to destroy inner darkness.

HarirEva Jagat Pitru-Matru-Gatih: He is the eternal Father (*Pitru*) who protects with authority, the eternal Mother (*Matru*) who nurtures with unconditional love across millions of births, and the final Destination (*Gati*). He alone has the absolute power to grant liberation (*Moksha*) and serve as the final support for all souls.

Yuga Dharma, Scriptural Origins, and the Power of Naama Smarana…

Scriptures outline specific, prescribed means of liberation (*Saadhana*) tailored to the spiritual capacity of mankind in each distinct cosmic age (*Yuga*):

Kritha Yuga: Meditation and intense penance (*Dhyana*), which required vast lifespans and absolute mental mastery.

Tretha Yuga: Elaborate ritual sacrifices (*Yajna*), requiring immense wealth, flawless execution, and highly realized priests.

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Dwapara Yuga: Detailed temple worship (*Archana*), requiring unblemished physical standards and strict ritual purity.

Kali Yuga: Divine remembrance and chanting (*Naama Smarana / Kirtana*).

Textual Origin of the Maha Mantra (Hare Rama-Hare Krishna)

The primary scriptural source of this Shodasa Nama Mantra (16-word great mantra) is the **Kali-Santaraṇa Upaniṣad**, which belongs to the **Krishna Yajurveda.**

The Scriptural Context: In this specific Upanishad, Sage Narada approaches Lord Brahma at the end of the Dvapara Yuga. Narada asks how humanity can cross or overcome the evil effects of the coming age of Kali Yuga. Lord Brahma replies that the ultimate way to dissolve the negative influences of Kali Yuga is simply by uttering the names of the primeval Purusha, Lord Narayana. When Narada asks for the specific names, Brahma reveals the 16 words…

Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare
Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare

Lord Brahma concludes the instruction with this definitive statement:

इति षोडशकं नाम्नां कलिकल्मषनाशनम् ।

नातः परतरोपायः सर्ववेदेषु दृश्यते ॥

iti ṣoḍaśakaṁ nāmnāṁ kali-kalmaṣa-nāśanam |
nātaḥ parataropāyaḥ sarva-vedeṣu dṛśyate ||

Meaning: These sixteen names are completely destructive of the evil effects of Kali Yuga. After searching through all Vedic

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literature, no better method of spiritual practice can be found for this age.

Additional Puranic Sources: The mantra is also found and praised in other prominent texts like the Padma Purana (Svarga Khanda 50.6), and the Brahmavaivarta Purana.

Because people in Kali Yuga lack the physical stamina, lifespan, and spiritual strength needed for the rigorous sadhanas of previous ages, the Supreme God mercifully condensed the full potency of all spiritual paths into this simple, unhindered act of chanting. This overarching divine shortcut is gloriously confirmed in **Srimad Bhagavatam (12.3.51)**:

कलेर्दोषनिधे राजन्नस्ति ह्येको महान् गुणः ।

कीर्तनादेव कृष्णस्य मुक्तसङ्गः परं व्रजेत् ॥

kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ |

kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet ||

Meaning: "Although Kaliyuga is an ocean of faults, oh' King, there is still one grand quality about this age: simply by chanting the names of Lord Sri Krishna, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom."

This scriptural reality is beautifully celebrated in Haridasa Sahitya. Sri Purandara Dasaru (the *Sangeeta Pitamaha*) singing under his pen-name *Purandara Vittala*, ecstatically proclaims in his Devaranama:

"Kaliyugadali **Hari** namava nenedare kulakotigalu uddharisuvavu"

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In Kali Yuga, if one simply remembers the name of Lord Sri Hari, millions of generations of their lineage are instantly liberated and uplifted).

In another song, *"Smarane Onde Saalade"*, he asks: *"Vittala namma nene manave..."* (Is not remembrance of our Lord Vittala alone enough, oh mind, to cross the ocean of existence?).

Proper Anusandhana

To unlock the full, liberating potential of this practice, the tongue's chant must be paired with **Proper Anusandhana** (meditative intellectual alignment). In the lineage of Sri Madhvacharya, this means consciously holding six core truths in mind while chanting:

Hari Sarvottamatva: Remembering the supreme, independent authority of Lord Hari.

Jiva Paratantratva: Acknowledging the soul's absolute, helpless dependence on His grace.

Taratamya: Respecting the cosmic hierarchy through which the Lord's grace flows (via Goddess Lakshmi, Vayu Deva/Mukhyaprana…).

Bimba-Pratibimba Bhava: Realizing that the Lord is the original object (*Bimba*) inside our hearts, and our soul is merely His reflection (*Pratibimba*), entirely animated by Him.

Nirdosha Guna Purnatva: Contemplating that the Lord and His Name are completely flawless and filled with infinite, auspicious attributes.

Nāhaṁ Karta Hariḥ Karta: Complete surrender of independent doership. One must maintain the profound

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awareness: *"I am not the doer - Lord Hari is the true doer.* This mindset completely eliminates the ego of being the performer of actions (*Kartrtva Abhimana*), aligning with the classical maxim:

नाहं कर्ता हरिः कर्ता तत्पूजा कर्मचाखिलम्।

तथापि मत्कृता पूजा तत्प्रसादेन नान्यथा॥

Nāhaṁ kartā hariḥ kartā tat-pūjā karma-cākhilam |
Tathāpi mat-kṛtā pūjā tat-prasādena nānyathā ||

Meaning: "I am not the doer - Lord Hari is the doer. Every single work/action I perform is actually an offering of worship unto Him. Even then, if it is said that 'I' performed this worship, it is solely due to His grace and enablement, and not by any independent power of my own."

Limitless Compassion of the Lord

The sheer magnitude of the Lord's mercy (*Parama Dayalutva*) is explicitly illustrated by Sri Madhvacharya in his compilation, the **Sri Krishnamruta Maharnava (Verse 93)**:

शाठ्येनापि नमस्कारं कुर्वतः शार्ङ्गपाणये।

शतजन्मार्जितं पापं नश्यत्येव न संशयः॥ ९३॥

Śāṭhyenāpi namaskāraṁ kurvataḥ śārṅgapāṇaye |
Śata-janmārjitaṁ pāpaṁ naśyatyeva na saṁśayaḥ ||

Meaning: Even if one offers a salutation or prostration unto the Lord who holds the divine Sharnga bow (*Śārṅgapāṇi*) out of deceit, pretension, pride, or ego (*Śāṭhyenāpi*); the sins accumulated over a hundred previous births are completely destroyed without a doubt."

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Lord Sri Hari is so profoundly compassionate that His name and form possess inherent, absolute spiritual potency. Just as fire burns an object regardless of whether it is touched intentionally or accidentally, aligning one's body and speech toward the Supreme Being—even with an imperfect, egoistic mindset—triggers an unstoppable flow of cleansing grace. The *Sharnga* bow He holds is entirely *Chinmaya* (pure consciousness), weaponized not to harm the fallen soul, but to pierce and destroy their deep-rooted internal ignorance. If a prideful bow can effortlessly dissolve a hundred lifetimes of accumulated sins, the spiritual merit and liberating grace generated when a soul surrenders with pure love, deep devotion, and proper *Anusandhana* is completely boundless.

Vishnu bhakti/faith in Lord Vishnu is one of the fundamentals/foundations of Dvaita ethics. HariDaAsas' in general, in Madhva sampradaya in particular have adopted this unique form of Bhakti ie. KEERTANA (NaAma-SankeErtana) in their propagation of Vishnu Bhakti which is considered as one of the nine forms of expression of Bhakti (NavaVidha Bhakti);

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढव्रता: ।

नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।।

satataṁ kīrtayanto māṁ yatantaśh cha dṛiḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaśh cha māṁ bhaktyā nitya-yuktā upāsate

In Bhagavad Gita (canto-9 sloka # 14), Lord Sri Krishna says that His devotees with firm resolution always make vigorous efforts to sing/chant His glories and constantly worship Him with all humility and humbleness.

सन्ततं चिन्तयेऽनन्तं अन्तकाले विशेषतः

नैवोदापुः गृणन्तोऽन्तं यद्गुणानां अजादयः ॥

saMtataM chiMtayE~naMtaM aMtakAlE vishEShataH

naivOdApuH gRuNaMtO&MtaM yadguNAnAM ajAdayaH ||

In his famous hymn, the *Dwadasa Stotra*, Sri Madhvacharya instructs us to always—in every condition and at all times (*sarvakaala sarvavastha*)—contemplate, think, and focus on Bhagawan Sri Hari. He is *Hari Sarvottama*, the Infinite One filled with endless auspicious attributes (*anantha kalyaana gunaparipoorna*). This intense focus is especially crucial at the moment of, or in anticipation of, death (*antakaala*)."

Even the BrahmaAdi Devatas' always praise the unique, great, exemplary, extraordinary, auspicious qualities of Lord **SriHari** which has no end, yet they can never reach the position of having completely described or understood even a single one of these infinite attributes.

Does this constant remembrance happen all by itself? No! It requires regular practice (*Abhyasa*) to keep the mind anchored on Sri Hari at all times. This spiritual practice unfolds in systematic stages: First, we practice *Hari Chintana* through deliberate effort. Over time, we gain the ability to recall Him at will. As the practice deepens, we learn to focus on Him despite external distractions. Finally, we reach a state of complete absorption, completely oblivious to the chaos around us. This seamless focus is achieved only through steady, lifelong practice.

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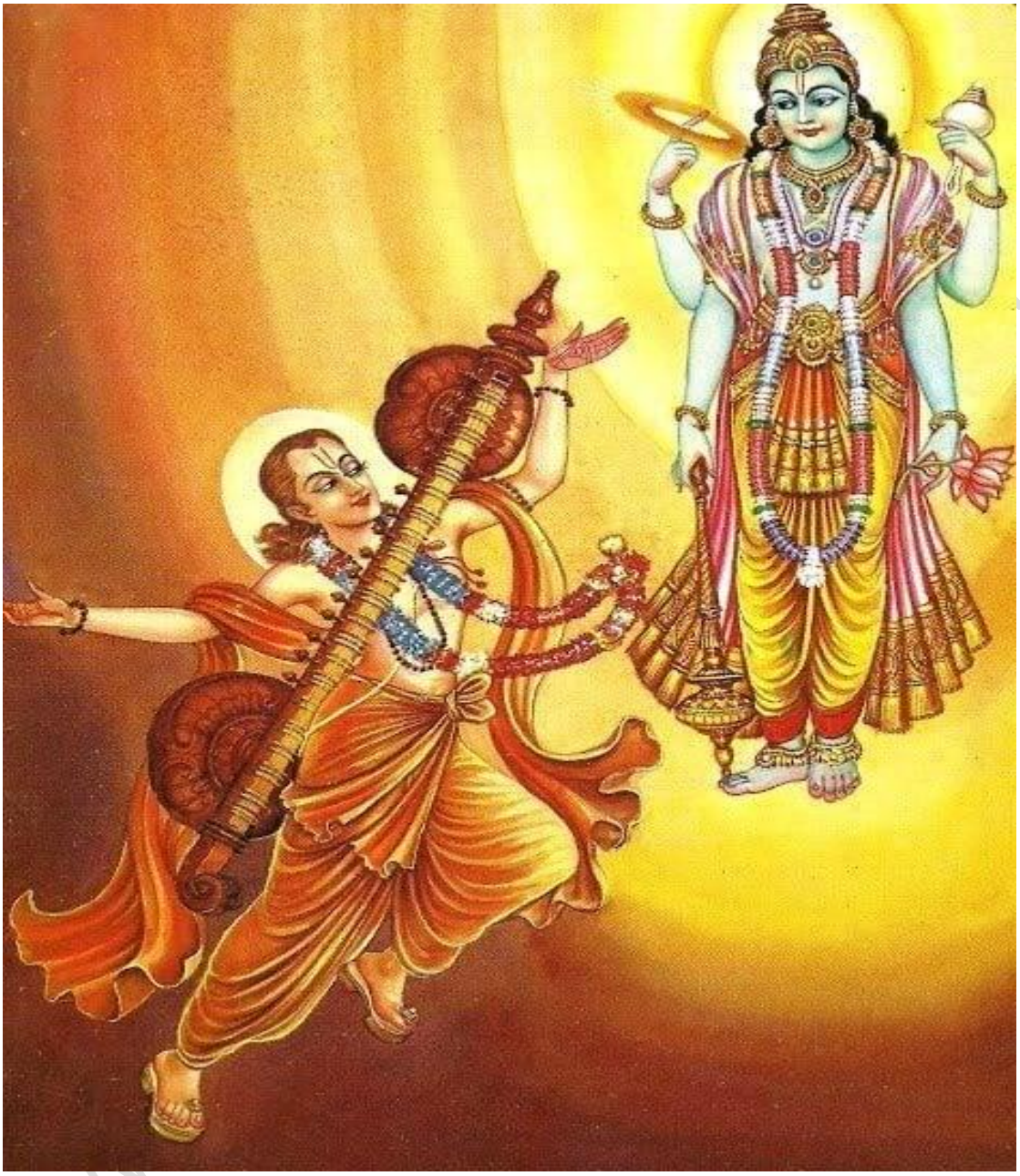

यत्र यत्र भवेज्जन्म मम कर्मनिबन्धनात् ।

तत्र तत्र हरे भक्तिस्त्वयि स्यादक्षता सदा ॥

Yatra yatra bhaved janma mama karma-nibandhanāt |

Tatra tatra Hare bhaktiḥ tvayi syād akṣatā sadā ||

(Naradeeya Purana)

O’ Lord Sri Hari! Whatever births I may have to take as a consequence of the bondage of my own past deeds (Karma), in all of those births, may I always possess unbroken and undiminished devotion toward You.

Sri KrishnaArpanamastu

naham karta harih karta

Hari Sarvottama- Vaayu Jeevottama

Sri GuruRaajo Vijayate

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